

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /056 W
-----045679 181803Z /46

O 181705Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8984

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 475

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, BL

SUBJECT: US EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER HUNGER STRIKE AND
ELECTION PROSPECTS

REF: STATE 13290

1. I USED THE OCCASION OF DINNER LAST NIGHT WITH JUAN PEREDA AND
PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER JAVIER ARCE TO COVER THE US CONCERNS IN
REFTEL. I ADDED MY OWN PLEA ON A POINT THAT CONCERNS ME
VERY MUCH--THE GOB'S TENDENCY TO LOSE ITS COOL OVER EACH
INCIDENT OF POLITICAL AGITATION, TREATING THEM ALL AS
DAILY TESTS OF WHETHER OR NOT ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE.

2. PEREDA SAID THAT HE HAD RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT BANZER
THAT HE DECLARE A GENERAL AMNESTY, ALLOWING ALL EXILES TO
RETURN, THAT THE CABINET HAS AGREED, AND THAT BANZER WOULD
ANNOUNCE THIS DECISION THAT NIGHT (HE DID). PEREDA AND ARCE
HOPED THAT THIS ACTION OF THE GOB, WHICH MET THE HUNGER
STRIKERS' MAJOR REMAINING DEMAND, WOULD LEAD TO AN EARLY
END OF THE STRIKE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY SAID, THE
GOVERNMENT WOULD IN ALL PROBABILITY RELEASE THE 132 STRIKERS
NOW DETAINED (COUNTING THOSE IN DETENTION CENTERS AND THOSE
IN THE HOSPITAL). PEREDA ADDED THAT THE SAME BANZER SPEECH
WOULD EMPHATICALLY REITERATE THE GOB'S DETERMINATION TO
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PROCEED WITH THE ELECTIONS (IT DID).

3. AN INTERESTING INDICATION OF THE DELICATE STATE OF THE
GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION ON THE LATTER POINT IS THE
FOLLOWING SEQUENCE OF EVENTS. AT 8:30 PM PEREDA, WHO HAD JUST
LEFT A CONTINUING CABINET MEETING, TOLD ME THE ABOVE,
PROBABLY WITH BANZER'S CONCURRENCE, IN TOTAL CONFIDENCE

THAT EVERYTHING WAS SET. YET THE CABINET MEETING WENT ON FOR THREE MORE HOURS. PEREDA AND ARCE, WHILE WAITING AT ARCE'S HOUSE FOR BANZER'S SPEECH, CLEARLY BECAME VERY NERVOUS AS THE EVENING WORE ON. ARCE SEVERAL TIMES CALLED HIS COLLEAGUE, EDWIN TAPIA, WHO REMAINED WITH BANZER IN THE CABINET MEETING. WHEN THE SPEECH CAME ON TELEVISION AT MIDNIGHT, ARCE, WHO HAD SUPPOSEDLY READ THE "FINAL" TEXT MANY HOURS EARLIER, WAS HANGING ON EVERY WORD AND GAVE A GREAT SIGH OF RELIEF AT THE CONSLUSION.

BOEKER

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, AMNESTY, ELECTIONS
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Draft Date: 18 jan 1978
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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